



Post-Bureaucratic Model and Organizational Performance in the Nigerian Public Service Vol. 3, No. 1, 2025 (Pp. 30-50)
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<p>Received: August 2025 Revised: September 2025 Accepted: October 2025 Online: November 2025</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Organizational effectiveness, Post-bureaucratic model, Nigeria's public sector, Strategies</i></p>	<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>This paper examines the implementation of the post-bureaucratic model and its impact on organizational effectiveness within the Nigerian public sector. The primary mandate of the public service in Nigeria is to ensure optimal performance in delivering a broad spectrum of services to the general public. However, a broad range of responsibilities, a large population to serve, and strict adherence to established regulations collectively impede operational efficiency. Thus, the Nigerian public service continues to operate under intense institutional pressure. This condition has historically legitimized the adoption of bureaucratic structures to ensure procedural precision and minimize the risk of litigation by dissatisfied stakeholders. Nonetheless, the advent of advanced technologies has increasingly rendered many traditional bureaucratic paradigms inadequate for addressing contemporary organizational demands. In response, this article examines the effectiveness of the post-bureaucratic model as a strategic approach for improving organizational performance within Nigeria's public sector. Anchored in a qualitative research design, the study draws upon secondary data obtained from scholarly texts, peer-reviewed journal articles, reputable online sources, and media publications. Key findings highlight persistent bureaucratic impediments, including red tape, administrative inertia, corruption, and structural rigidity. The study concludes by proposing context-specific strategies for embedding post-bureaucratic practices within the Nigerian public service. Central among these are the prioritization of leadership development, the formulation of robust change management frameworks, and the adoption of policy instruments that incentivize innovation. The study contributes to knowledge by demonstrating the significance of the post-bureaucratic paradigm in improving organizational performance in Nigeria's public service.</p>
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1. Introduction

One enduring institutional legacy of colonial administration in Nigeria is the public service, which has remained a foundational and stable element of the nation's governance architecture, despite recurrent shifts in political and military leadership. As a service-oriented institution, the Nigerian public service is entrusted with the dual yet complementary responsibilities of formulating and implementing public policy (Raheem, 2020). These functions are not only interdependent but also crucial for the smooth operation of the government.

By translating policy decisions into actionable programmes, the public service plays a central and strategic role in executing government initiatives. In doing so, it serves as a vital instrument for driving national development, promoting good governance, and ensuring that the aspirations of the Nigerian people are effectively realized (Sadran, 2024). This is why, in its justification of the Nigerian public service, it was reasoned that “the civil/public service in Nigeria is the primary instrument through which the government implements its policies and programmes. As the primary and principal instrument of governance, its nature, effectiveness,

and responsiveness cannot escape the constant attention of the government, whose intent is to fulfill its pledges to the people (Nwangwu, 2021).

To be sure, therefore, like any other institutional instrument or agency, the Nigerian public service must undergo continuous overhaul, reform, restructuring, and reorientation to remain functional and practical. Regrettably, however, the public service in Nigeria has often fallen short of expectations, failing to fully justify its chequered history and its establishment as a vehicle for efficient service delivery (Nwangwu, 2021). No wonder Sari (2023) emphasized that public servants play a critical role in administering governance institutions and providing policy advice to ministers across sectors such as health, education, transportation, economic development, and poverty alleviation. Nonetheless, many public servants across Africa—and especially in Nigeria—demonstrate limited capacity to formulate, implement, and evaluate policies, programs, and strategies to promote physical and economic growth and sustainable development.

Furthermore, insufficient infrastructure, office equipment, and essential facilities hinder their ability to perform their responsibilities professionally and efficiently. Consequently, the public service often lacks the capacity for innovation. It is frequently characterized by low staff morale, stemming from poor salary structures, unfavorable working environments, and the prevalence of patronage-based appointments rather than merit-based recruitment. Accordingly, the development of robust institutional capacity is both essential and urgently required to support good governance, foster economic growth, and achieve sustainable development. Historically, before the implementation of the 1988 public service reform, the Nigerian public service exhibited deep-rooted structural and functional inefficiencies. Although the roles and responsibilities of the Nigerian public service have evolved, its structural framework and operational methods have remained essentially unchanged for decades. According to Sadran (2024), the public service in Nigeria struggles to develop the discipline required to adopt innovative approaches and integrate them effectively to improve the system as a whole.

In the same context, Sari (2023) observed that the Nigerian public service is fundamentally impaired, lacking the core qualities needed for effective performance. He attributes this to unprofessional conduct, deep-rooted political bias, persistent corruption, slow policy implementation, general inefficiency, and a prevailing attitude of selfishness and greed. According to Raheem (2020), personnel management in the Nigerian public service was disorganized, characterized by inconsistencies, inadequate coordination, and repeated role and duty overlaps across departments and agencies. He noted that these challenges were among the most prevalent features of the Nigerian public service prior to the 1988 reform initiative. This paper examines the historical evolution of the Nigerian public service, explores the concept of post-bureaucracy, and evaluates its role in promoting efficiency and enhancing performance in the public sector.

2. Method and Materials

The study employs a qualitative method, as it is purely non-empirical. Materials are obtained from secondary sources, including journals, newspapers, textbooks, and periodicals.

Table 1. Research Steps

Determining the research theme	The implementation of the post-bureaucratic model and its impact on organizational effectiveness
Determining data sources	Secondary sources, including journals, newspapers, and textbooks
Conducting analysis	Analysis of data sources
Conducting discussion	Discussing the results of the study of data sources

3. Results from Literature

3.1. The Public Service

Public service refers to a body or department within the executive arm of government that is tasked with supporting the planning and implementation of government policies. Unlike profit-oriented organizations, public service institutions are established to deliver essential services to the public, ensuring the well-being and development of society (Tshombe et al, 2020). The coexistence of any group of people, anywhere in the world, necessitates some form of governance, administration, and division of labor to sustain the group's existence. The concept of the public good further suggests that certain services are best utilized collectively and are most efficient and effective when provided centrally. Delivering such services often requires the full-time dedication of specific team members. This, in essence, forms the foundation of the basic theory of public service (Agartan & Kuhlmann, 2019).

Public service organizations are responsible for delivering essential services to the people. The public service encompasses a wide range of sectors, including the civil service, which comprises career staff whose appointments, promotions, and discipline fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) at the federal, state, and local levels of government. In addition to the civil service, the public service includes personnel in the National Assembly Service, the Judiciary, the Armed Forces, the Police, and other paramilitary agencies, as well as employees of parastatals, educational institutions, and health services.

From this categorization, it is evident that while the civil service is a core component of the public service, the two are not synonymous. The civil service refers specifically to permanent, professional bureaucrats within government ministries and departments. In contrast, the public service has a broader scope, covering all individuals employed by the government in various capacities. The public service is a broader concept that includes not only the civil service but also the Armed Forces, the Judiciary, the Police, government institutions, parastatals, government-owned companies, and statutory agencies. It represents the entirety of government employees who contribute to the implementation of public policies and the delivery of essential services. It is, however, impossible to discuss the public service without referencing the civil service, as the latter forms its administrative backbone (Jide, 2023).

According to Bello (2023), the civil service refers specifically to state functionaries who are appointed to their positions through a non-elective process. These individuals typically operate within government ministries and departments, and their roles are crucial in ensuring continuity and professionalism in public administration. These officials serve within both the

central government ministries and other non-ministerial departments. Unlike ministries, which are overseen by ministers, extra-ministerial bodies are led by chairpersons or appointed heads. As [Igbokwe-Ibeto et al. \(2020\)](#) explain, the civil service encompasses these ministries and departments responsible for implementing government policies. Civil servants at the federal, state, and local levels not only implement policies but also contribute valuable insights and data that inform policy development.

Public servants are entrusted with ensuring the safety and well-being of the public while maintaining a sense of responsibility toward the environment. They are held accountable not only for their professional conduct but also for the performance and ethical standards of those under their supervision. Additionally, they bear a broader responsibility to uphold the integrity of their profession as part of their service to society. A commitment to the public interest must always take precedence over personal gain, serving as a safeguard against unethical or incompetent behavior in public service ([Aina, 2024](#)).

Public service serves as the arm of government tasked with translating the collective will of the people into action. According to [Wicaksono \(2019\)](#), if the primary purpose of public service is to deliver social services, and if the level of development in a state is determined by its capacity to provide such services, then public service becomes a critical instrument for achieving development. In essence, there is a direct connection between public service and national development. However, the extent to which public service can drive development is largely influenced by the environment in which it operates ([Egwuatu, 2023](#)).

3.2. Organizational Performance

Organizational performance refers to the effectiveness with which an organization operates and the extent to which it accomplishes its routine activities and achieves its established goals. Evaluating performance involves assessing the actual outcomes against the expected targets, allowing the organization to gauge its progress and success in meeting its objectives. Performance assessments are generally undertaken by business owners, strategic partners, and managers ([Raheem, 2020](#)).

The evaluation process focuses on identifying and implementing methods to enhance the organization's overall efficiency and success. An organization is essentially a structured social group, intentionally formed, where individuals regularly work together toward achieving collective objectives. Instances such as educational institutions, healthcare facilities, religious establishments, production companies, service-based businesses, commercial outlets, law enforcement bodies, armed forces groups, nonprofit entities, new business ventures, and municipal, regional, and national government bodies all represent types of organizations ([Sari, 2023](#)). However, organizational performance is defined in the following six main approaches:

3.3. Goal Approach

Organizations are established with a defined purpose set by their shareholders. The performance of an organization indicates how effectively it meets the expectations of its shareholders and maintains its position in the marketplace ([Fakhoury, 2020](#)). Additionally, organizational performance is considered the result of the efforts and actions undertaken by its

members to evaluate how successfully the organization has achieved its goals (Molobela & Uwizeyimana, 2023).

Organizational performance refers to an organization's ability to achieve its intended objectives. Achieving these goals serves as a key indicator in evaluating an organization's performance. Regular evaluations are conducted to determine whether the organization meets its established objectives; however, suggestions often overlook the resources an organization requires to achieve its objectives and aspirations (Fakhoury, 2020). Similarly, Mongalo (2022) argues that performance is defined as “achieving the goals that were given to you in alignment with the organization's orientations. According to him, performance is not simply the outcome itself, but rather the result of comparing the outcome to the original objective. Other scholars, such as Gwala & Mashau (2023), share a view of organizational performance similar to that of Matara et al. (2024), who define organizational performance as a measure of an organization's success or effectiveness, indicating how well it functions in achieving its objectives. Scholars like these contend that the true measure of organizational performance is reflected in its ability to grow and sustain itself over time (Munzhedzi, 2020). A common thread running through these definitions is the focus on effectiveness, specifically, the extent to which an organization successfully achieves its intended objectives.

3.4. System Resource Approach

This perspective emphasizes the dynamic interaction between an organization and its external environment. Johan & Frans (2022) argued that an organization demonstrates proactivity when it capitalizes on its environment to acquire valuable and scarce resources that enhance its operations. Similarly, Kadakure & Twum-Dako (2024) previously recommended assessing organizational performance by examining two key dimensions: the extent of alignment between the organization and its external environment, and the compatibility between the organization and its internal stakeholders. Great points—your ideas are clear, and with some refinement, we can enhance the flow and eliminate some redundancy.

Mongalo (2022) believed that an organization's performance is more likely to succeed when there is effective interaction between the organization, its environment, and its employees. Staff members play a vital role in ensuring operational efficiency, which is why Leigland (2018) emphasized that organizational performance is largely dependent on the quality of employee performance. Maintaining high organizational performance depends on employees' ongoing access to updated knowledge and skill development (Munzhedzi, 2020). This continuous learning process equips staff to respond effectively to evolving market conditions, thereby enhancing overall performance. Furthermore, Mongalo (2022) noted that organizations demonstrating high performance are those that consistently fulfill customer needs and expectations. The perspectives of these researchers introduced a new dimension to the concept of organizational performance—namely, relevance and client satisfaction—although they did not fully resolve the ongoing ambiguity surrounding the concept.

3.5. Social System Approach

Within this framework, organizational performance is viewed as the capacity of a company—operating as a social system with finite resources—to achieve its objectives without

overextending its resources or overburdening its workforce. his interpretation emphasizes the importance of striking a balance between the means and the ends of organizational functioning (Leigland, 2018). Likewise, during the 1980s, performance was similarly conceptualized as a social system, emphasizing the need for organizations to evaluate both the resources they employ and the outcomes they pursue (Gromark & Melin, 2021).

The works of Fakhoury (2020) offered one of the most thorough and explicit treatments of the concept of organizational performance. He argued that in a high-performing organization, productivity is elevated, and employees exhibit strong levels of satisfaction and motivation. Conversely, indicators such as turnover, operational costs, and labor unrest are minimal or nonexistent. Cui et al. (2018) maintained that both efficiency, measured as the output-to-input ratio, and effectiveness operate in parallel and are equally critical to understanding organizational performance. He conceptualized performance as the aggregate of all forms of returns, which should be assessed by optimizing both efficiency and effectiveness simultaneously. The social system approach, in particular, emphasized organizational efficiency as a key dimension of performance.

Taken together, it becomes evident that effectiveness, relevancy, and efficiency constitute the three core dimensions of organizational performance. Consequently, in the early 2000s, definitions of organizational performance increasingly emphasized an organization's capacity to effectively and efficiently utilize its available resources to achieve outcomes aligned with its established objectives, while also ensuring those outcomes remain relevant to stakeholders (Dinakou et al, 2020). This definition integrates the three core dimensions of organizational performance: efficiency, effectiveness, and relevancy. Similarly, Fredriksson & Pallas (2019) asserted that performance measurement should involve the quantification of both efficiency and effectiveness. He further suggested that these dimensions can be evaluated using both qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Efficiency and effectiveness are closely related to performance; conversely, the performance of an organization is believed to encompass broader areas, including the connection between performance and organizational goals (effectiveness), organizational resources (efficiency), and stakeholder satisfaction (relevancy). Furthermore, Chirisa et al. (2024) conceptualized performance in the public sector as the alignment among goals, resources, and outcomes, highlighting that true performance arises from the combined application of efficiency, effectiveness, and a well-managed budgeting process. Organizational performance is the effective conversion of inputs into outputs aimed at achieving predetermined results (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2017a).

From a content perspective, performance captures three key relationships: the comparison between minimal and actual expenditure (economy), the ratio of expenditure to output (efficiency), and the connection between output and the outcomes achieved (effectiveness). In the context of the public sector, defining performance extends beyond financial considerations to include progress toward environmental sustainability and social equity goals. This environmental and social equity objective is an approach of Abdulrauf & Awurum (2024), which supports the need for the transition from the system of the 3E

(efficiency, effectiveness, and economy) to a 5E-type system (economy, efficiency, effectiveness, environment, and equity), which enables quality achievement.

3.6. Competing Values Approach

The competing values approach asserts that organizational goals are formulated differently by various stakeholder groups, each guided by their distinct expectations (Ghosh, 2021). Consequently, organizations may adopt diverse performance evaluation standards. Ramolobe & Khandanisa (2024) highlight that stakeholders favor an organization's ability to balance adaptability, stability, and overall effectiveness. Similarly, Fredriksson & Pallas (2019) emphasize that true organizational effectiveness stems from strong stakeholder engagement, achieved through collaborative workgroups and effective management practices.

3.7. Subjective Approach

The subjective approach posits that performance is not an objective measurable reality, but rather a socially constructed concept shaped by individual and collective perceptions. Performance can be linked to multiple dimensions, including economy, efficiency, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and equity. It may also involve various aspects such as outputs, outcomes, impacts, and consequences. Additionally, this approach emphasizes that performance is inherently future-oriented, reflecting aspirations and anticipated results rather than solely past achievements (Fobih, 2020). Business is deemed "successful" not solely based on the achievement of its goals, but on its potential to realize the objectives set by the management coalition. This view underscores the notion that performance is as much about future capabilities as it is about present outcomes. Consequently, performance is considered a subjective and interpretive construct. Its association with cost considerations further reflects the inherent ambiguity and complexity of the concept (Chileshe et al, 2022).

3.8. Constituency Approach

From the constituency standpoint, an organization is deemed successful when it is perceived positively by a range of stakeholders (Atobatele, 2018). Organizations engage with stakeholders to pursue both internal objectives and those valued by the stakeholders themselves (Abdullahi, 2024). Stakeholders are not viewed as limitations to the organization, but rather as assets that help achieve its mission. Entities that possess greater authority over essential resources generally exert more influence on organizational outcomes (Arimoro, 2018).

Consequently, achieving organizational goals requires addressing at least the fundamental needs of all stakeholders. Beyond the six commonly discussed approaches to performance evaluation, Ghosh (2021) emphasizes three core priorities for measuring performance. Firstly, each organization's performance should be evaluated within the specific context of the environment in which it operates—for instance, using relevant markets as a basis for performance analysis. Secondly, the goals defined by the organization must be aligned with how performance is assessed. A company evaluates its performance based on the goals and targets it sets for itself, rather than relying on the metrics used by outside groups. Third, performance is broken down into clear and important parts. According to Bjustrom (2020), the environment influences a company's performance, its goals, and the aspects of performance that matter most.

3.9. Organizational Targets

Formal organizations are meant to target the following areas:

3.9.1. Increased ability to Provide Customer Value

Organizations need to give value to their customers. If customers don't find value in what they get, they'll go to another company. That's why managers need to keep track of how well they're meeting customer needs, and they can do this by measuring performance (Ojo & Ogunpola, 2023).

3.9.2. Impact on Organizational Reputation

Just like your reputation affects how others see you and whether they trust or listen to you, an organization's reputation matters too. Companies want people—such as customers, suppliers, competitors, and the community—to have a favorable impression of them. A good reputation helps build trust and strong relationships.

3.10. Measures of Organizational Performance

There are three primary methods for measuring organizational performance. Generally applied measures are (1) Productivity, (2) Organizational Effectiveness, and (3) Organizational Ranking. A renowned management expert believed that employees need to understand how their work contributes to the organization's results. Organizations should focus on performance and aim for high standards, both as a team and individually. But before employees can work toward those goals, managers must clearly define what performance outcomes will be measured. Common ways to measure performance include productivity, effectiveness, and the organization's ranking within its industry (Drucker, 2018).

3.10.1. Organizational Productivity

Productivity refers to the total amount of goods or services produced concerning the resources used to create them. Organizations aim to maximize productivity by generating more output while using fewer inputs. Output is typically measured by the revenue earned from selling products or services (calculated as selling price times quantity sold), while input includes the costs of obtaining and using resources to produce that output. Managers play a crucial role in enhancing productivity by reducing input costs and enhancing the value of output. In essence, organizational productivity reflects how efficiently employees carry out their tasks (Tony & Jari, 2023).

3.10.2. Organizational Effectiveness

Effectiveness measures how suitable an organization's goals are and how successfully those goals are being met. It's one of the most commonly used tools by managers to assess performance. The process model focuses on the internal operations of the organization, specifically, how effectively inputs are transformed into desired outputs. Meanwhile, the multiple constituencies model suggests that effectiveness should be evaluated using various measures that reflect the diverse priorities and expectations of different stakeholder groups (David et al, 2023). Different groups, such as customers, advocacy organizations, suppliers, and financial analysts, each use their own criteria to judge an organization's performance.

While all of these effectiveness models can be useful for assessing certain parts of how an organization operates, what matters most to managers is whether the organization is meeting its goals. This focus drives how they develop strategies, organize tasks, design workflows, and manage employees.

3.10.3. Ranking of Industries

Performance is evaluated through clearly defined metrics. For example, Fortune ranks the top-performing Fortune 500 companies using financial indicators such as profit levels, return on revenue, and return on shareholders' equity. Additional criteria include profit growth over 1, 5, and 10 years, as well as revenue generated per employee, per dollar of assets, and per dollar of equity (Tshombe et al, 2020). Similarly, Industry Week selects its best-managed plants based on overall organizational achievements and the demonstration of strong management practices in areas such as financial results, innovation, leadership quality, global presence, strategic partnerships and alliances, employee development and benefits, and community contributions. As a result, various organizations and agencies use different sets of criteria to evaluate and rank the performance of industries or companies (Suyeon, 2023).

3.11. The Nigerian Public Service

The Nigerian Constitution provides the legal basis for the establishment of the public service through Sections 169, 171, 206, 208, and 318, as well as Section 10 of the Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). Although it does not offer a clear-cut definition of the terms "Nigerian public service" or "civil service," it acknowledges the existence of public service at the federal and state levels, and by implication, includes local government council services as part of the broader structure (Nigerian Constitution, 1999). What sets the Nigerian public service apart from other public sector entities is its composition of civil servants who are expected to demonstrate complete neutrality and objectivity in both political and economic matters. Their secured and fixed tenure underscores the commitment to ensuring continuity and stability in government operations (Sadran, 2024).

Civil servants serve as a stabilizing link between successive political administrations since they remain in office even as governments change. Another defining feature of the Nigerian public service lies in its organizational structure, shaped by its professional nature and the system of public administration through which it is managed. Three foundational elements of the civil service: its integrated structure, merit-based recruitment through open competition, and a distinct separation of roles—policy-oriented positions designated as "intellectual," and support roles, which may involve technical or mechanical duties, classified as "clerical" and handled independently (Tipu & Yousaf, 2022).

The Nigerian civil service traditionally leans toward appointing "generalist" administrators, underscoring a preference for broad administrative versatility over specialized expertise. An officer's career trajectory—including their role preference, assigned duties, and chances for promotion—is predominantly shaped by the cadre structure to which they are aligned (Vignieri, 2020). This prompts a critical reflection: despite its central place in the Nigerian public service, why has the cadre system consistently obstructed the implementation of genuine administrative reforms?. Since the service's inception, this system has not only

resisted transformation but has also played a significant role in perpetuating institutional inefficiencies. The persistent inefficiency and lack of effectiveness within the Nigerian public service can be traced to the pervasive influence of politics, which has been systematically embedded across various sectors and occupational categories of the service (Vignieri, 2020). Over the years, the system has cultivated a culture where political interests take precedence over administrative integrity and competence.

3.12. Challenges of Bureaucracy and Organizational Performance in the Nigerian Public Service

In other words, bureaucracy encompasses all organizations that form part of the governmental framework, tasked with executing policy decisions and delivering essential services to the public. It is not merely an administrative convenience but a constitutionally mandated institution of the state. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria affirms this in Chapter VI, specifically in Section 1 (D) and Section 2 (C), which provide for the establishment and operation of bureaucratic structures at both the federal and state levels of government. Public bureaucracy includes a broad range of government institutions such as the national and state legislatures, the judiciary, the police, the armed forces, paramilitary agencies, parastatals, extra-ministerial departments, as well as agencies involved in social services, commercial activities, regulation, education, and research, among others (Aiyede, 2021). Although bureaucracy plays a vital and often unavoidable role in the functioning of modern societies, it has long been associated with various challenges such as:

3.12.1. Job Monotony

Even Max Weber, recognized as the pioneer of modern bureaucratic theory, was aware of the criticisms and concerns that come with bureaucratic systems. One major criticism of bureaucracy is its strict division of labor, which often results in monotony and a sense of boredom among workers. More critically, it can lead to **alienation**, where employees feel detached or disconnected from the broader society and the impact of their work (Asaju & Ayeni, 2021).

3.12.2. Trained Incapacity

This sense of estrangement reflects a deeper issue within bureaucratic systems. Concerned about this outcome, Max Weber warned of a future where society could be dominated by "little cogs," individuals reduced to repetitive, narrow roles, constantly striving for slightly higher positions, yet losing their sense of purpose and identity (Aina, 2024). Akinola (2024) also acknowledged that while the division of labour has undoubtedly improved the efficiency of many complex bureaucratic systems, it can also result in what he refers to as **Trained incapacity**. This occurs when workers become so narrowly specialized in their roles that they lose the ability or willingness to adapt or see beyond their immediate responsibilities. In some cases, they may become indifferent to activities in other departments, leading to fragmentation and inefficiency (Aina, 2024). Moreover, the bureaucratic emphasis on **impersonality**, treating tasks and people with detached objectivity, often clashes with broader societal values that prioritize empathy, flexibility, and human connection.

3.12.3. Cultural Clash

According to [Buhari \(1998\)](#), public organizations, due to their bureaucratic nature, often experience tension with societal expectations, particularly in their modes of operation, emotional outlook, and primary concerns. This tension stems from the contrast between societal and bureaucratic values. While society values human interaction, spontaneity, and emotional expression, bureaucracy emphasizes technical expertise, structured procedures, and emotional detachment. This fundamental divergence creates ongoing friction between public institutions and the citizens they serve. In response to this dilemma, [Ibrahim & Salihu \(2019\)](#) observed that maintaining one's humanity in a bureaucratic system requires conscious resistance. As [Vignieri \(2020\)](#) interprets, Weber believed that to avoid the soul-crushing effects of bureaucratic routine, one must actively gain mastery over the bureaucratic way of life rather than be consumed by it.

3.12.4. Red Tapism

While the issue of red tape in bureaucracy may seem overemphasized, the daily frustrations experienced by individuals in their interactions with public officials persist as a pressing concern. In many cases, particularly within bureaucracies in developing nations such as Nigeria, inefficiency and a lack of urgency remain significant challenges ([Asaju & Ayeni, 2021](#)). Globally, the strict adherence to rules and procedures, although intended to ensure order and fairness, has contributed to the bureaucracy's reputation for being slow, rigid, and unresponsive to the public's needs.

Following rules is generally appropriate, but he contends that excessive focus on them can sometimes hinder an organization's broader objectives. When applied without discretion, rules may lose their purpose as tools for achieving goals and instead become ends in themselves ([Nuwagba, 2023](#)). This rigid insistence on compliance often puts bureaucracy at odds with the public, who struggle to understand why officials can't use personal judgment to resolve issues. Bureaucratic systems place certain expectations on both clients and employees ([Njoroje, 2018](#)). However, many people in society find it hard to cope with these expectations. To them, bureaucracy feels like a burden; they see it as entirely negative and associate the operations of modern organizations with frustrating and unnecessary procedures ([Sunstein, 2017](#)).

3.12.5. Anti-Democratic

According to [Mongalo \(2022\)](#), bureaucracy is fundamentally opposed to democracy. Although bureaucracy is often praised for its efficiency, its principles are at odds with those of democracy. Democracy is built on compromise, inclusiveness, and the authority of the people, as reflected in Abraham Lincoln's famous definition: a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Bureaucracy, on the other hand, operates through rigid rules and procedures, which, if not made more flexible, can conflict with the participatory and people-centered nature of democratic governance ([Aiyede, 2021](#)).

[Leigland \(2018\)](#) points out that the inefficiency of Nigeria's public service undermines the credibility of its democratic government. This inefficiency largely stems from the rigid adherence to bureaucratic procedures, which often results in delayed and poorly executed policymaking. Policies take an excessively long time to be implemented, all under the guise of

following due process, while citizens, who are the end beneficiaries, suffer the consequences. This stands in stark contrast to military regimes, where directives from military leaders are swiftly executed by the civil service without delay (Center, 2021).

3.12.6. Federal Character

To address Nigeria's ethnic and regional diversity, the 1979 Constitution and later versions introduced the federal character principle, which seeks to ensure that all regions and ethnic groups are fairly represented in the federal public service. Although the goal is admirable, its implementation can weaken both democracy and the pursuit of excellence. It often leads to situations where more capable individuals are passed over, while less qualified candidates are chosen just to meet representation requirements (Agartan & Kuhlmann, 2019).

The continued use of this system has weakened public administration in Nigeria, making it harder to deliver services efficiently and support national development. A key example of this is the poor hiring practices linked to the federal character principle, which have encouraged unethical conduct among public sector workers. Supporting this view, Agartan & Kuhlmann (2019) argued that the federal character principle and its implementation have not succeeded in attracting a capable and motivated workforce into the Nigerian public service. As a result, it has hindered administrative efficiency and weakened the effective execution of government policies aimed at achieving sustainable development.

3.12.7. Influence of Colonial Master

Mongalo (2022) pointed out that colonial influence, particularly through language and Western concepts of knowledge, has distorted the understanding of public service in Africa. He explained that there are generally two types of public in African public service: the civic public, which operates without moral considerations, and the primordial public, which is guided by moral values. This division is evident in Nigeria and has had a profound impact on the functioning of the public service.

In Nigeria's public service, two coexisting systems exist: the formal, centralized political structure and an informal system shaped by regional interests, personal loyalties, and ethnic affiliations. Expanding on this, Tony & Jari (2023) noted that one side of the public sphere is dominated by primordial influences, where personal ties and sentiments guide behavior, while the other side is linked to the legacy of colonial rule and aligned with the formal political processes of post-independence Nigeria. This division stands in contrast to Max Weber's concept of an impersonal, objective public service based on merit and neutrality (David et al., 2023).

3.12.8. Culture

Another element that has shaped the behavior of public servants in Nigeria is the cultural orientation of its people. Culture encompasses the entire lifestyle and social practices of a community. Johan & Frans (2022) refer to it as a "blueprint for living," while Molobela & Uwizeyimana (2023) assert that culture guides individuals' behavior and frames their perception of the world. In the Nigerian context, deeply rooted values such as profound respect for elders, exceptional loyalty, and a strong sense of kinship have become fundamental aspects

of societal life, and these cultural traits have significantly influenced the attitudes and conduct of individuals within the public service (Suyeon, 2023).

This cultural influence, nonetheless, has adversely impacted the effectiveness of service delivery in the public sector. There have been cases where a public servant cannot be appropriately disciplined for misconduct due to considerations such as age, religious beliefs, or ethnic ties. In such situations, personal and ethnic loyalties often override the professional expectations and technical competence required in the public service (Ojo & Ogunpola, 2023). Additionally, a troubling trend is the display of loyalty towards officeholders as individuals, rather than a commitment to the public institution itself, which further weakens the integrity and functionality of the public service.

Many public servants in Nigeria are often observed spending a significant portion of their official working hours attending to personal errands for their superiors and their superiors' relatives, rather than focusing on their primary responsibilities to the public (Dada-bob, 2018). It is quite common to find employees participating in social events or attending to personal matters during work hours, often to gain favor and approval from their bosses, which is undeserved. Additionally, there is a prevailing mindset among public servants that the system is overloaded with unnecessary procedures and red tape (Marta et al., 2024). As a result, they tend to view public service as impersonal or irrelevant, leading to widespread apathy and a lack of dedication to their duties.

3.12.9. Ethnicity and Nepotism

These are fundamental ancestral ties that continue to shape operations within Nigeria's public service. Ethnic and tribal biases have fractured the unity of national identity, as individuals tend to show stronger allegiance to their ethnic groups than to the nation itself. The merit-based approach in human resource practices—intended to ensure fairness in recruitment and promotion—is expected to be applied objectively and consistently (Abolo, 2019). Unfortunately, this standard is often ignored. Instead, promotions, appointments, and access to various privileges in the public service are frequently influenced by ethnic loyalties and other personal factors rather than by qualifications or merit (Ukwandu & Ijere, 2020).

Ethnic groups often show keen interest in determining who occupies top positions such as Head of Service, Permanent Secretary, Director, and other influential roles. In many cases, the level of cooperation within the public service is influenced by the ethnic background of the officials involved. Subordinates are more likely to collaborate and show loyalty when they share the same ethnic background as their superior, but this cooperation tends to diminish when such ethnic alignment is absent (Bello, 2023).

Favoritism also remains a defining feature of the service, further undermining fairness and professionalism. Administrative favors are often extended to members of ethnic blocs, friends, relatives, and acquaintances, while others are outrightly denied the services they need—unless they resort to bribery. This practice of favoritism undermines the principles of impartiality and impersonality that should govern public service (Ukwandu & Ijere, 2020).

This is another critical issue hindering effective performance in the public service. The Nigerian public service, in particular, operates under ineffective and corrupt political

leadership. Such leadership, marked by corruption and ineptitude, negatively impacts both the content and quality of policies at the formulation stage, with corresponding challenges during implementation by public administrators (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2017b). For instance, policies are often formulated to serve the selfish and egoistic interests of political leaders, and at times, merely to attract public acclaim and attention. Little consideration is given to whether such policies are appropriate for addressing the actual problems at hand or whether they can be effectively implemented by the public bureaucracy (Matara et al, 2024).

In many instances, policy formulation in Nigeria is driven more by the pursuit of personal benefits and political gains for leaders and their associates than by genuine development objectives. As a consequence, policies are frequently assessed based on their political usefulness rather than their capacity to address real societal challenges. This often leads to the creation of policies that are either ill-suited to the context or lack articulated goals and practical implementation strategies. Such shortcomings contribute to the underperformance of public servants. Reflecting this situation, Fakhoury (2020) observes that policy implementation in Nigeria tends to resemble a process of experimentation or “trial and error.”

In such situations, policies and programs are often implemented in a disjointed manner and are sometimes discontinued or dismantled before completion. This often stems from the fact that the formulation of these policies was not initially anchored on accurate data, prevailing conditions, or actual societal needs. In Nigeria, there is a noticeable absence of clear policy frameworks and defined objectives to effectively steer the bureaucracy in the implementation process. As noted by Center (2021), this lack of coherent standards significantly hampers the successful execution of public policies. Many political office holders, lacking proper administrative guidance, frequently interfere in the operations of the public service by introducing harmful and ill-conceived policies. Their involvement often leads to undue promotions within the civil service and the exploitation of public servants as tools for embezzling public funds (Mette, 2023).

3.12.10. Corruption

This issue has become a deeply entrenched and harmful environmental factor, severely undermining the public service and preventing it from achieving the level of performance expected by Nigerian citizens (Babajide, 2017). The effectiveness of a nation’s public service is closely tied to the quality of its surrounding environment, one that must be accountable, transparent, and free from corruption. In essence, the public service is a reflection of its environment; it cannot function independently of it, nor rise above it. As such, the conditions within the broader socio-political environment have a direct and lasting impact on how well the public service performs its duties.

Nigeria has been consistently ranked among the most corrupt nations by Transparency International (Abolo, 2019). The public service, as a vital component of Nigerian society, has not remained immune to this reality; rather, it reflects the corrupt practices prevalent in the broader system. Corruption has deeply infiltrated the Nigerian public service to the extent that many officials in strategic and influential positions exploit their roles to amass personal wealth through unethical means (Wicaksono, 2019).

It is a widely acknowledged reality that many public servants in Nigeria live far beyond their official earnings, despite ongoing complaints about inadequate remuneration. In truth, corrupt practices among political officeholders are rarely carried out without the active collaboration of public servants (Egugbo, 2022). The public service has increasingly come to be seen not as a mechanism for national development, but as a platform for distributing the so-called “national cake” among the country’s major ethnic groups (Kadakure & Twum-Darko, 2024). This perception has contributed to persistent demands for the proliferation of government structures—such as additional ministries, departments, and units—as a means of securing a share of state resources.

The continuous multiplication of government structures is often driven by the desire to create opportunities for various ethnic groups to access and exploit public resources. This trend is further intensified by the widespread public perception that the public service is a morally neutral domain—one that exists to be exploited for personal, communal, or ethnic survival. As Bello (2023) observes, this mindset fosters a culture where public institutions are viewed less as instruments of national development and more as avenues for primitive accumulation.

3.12.11. Poor Remuneration of Public Servants

The wages and salaries of public servants in Nigeria are low and have continued to decline over the years, largely due to high inflation and other contributing factors. When compared with the private sector and the public service remuneration of other sub-Saharan African countries, Nigeria’s public service pay consistently lags (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al, 2020). Various efforts have been made to increase public sector salaries in Nigeria. Notably, before leaving office, President Goodluck Jonathan increased the national minimum wage to ₦18,000 per month.

More recently, a proposed minimum wage of ₦70,000 has been introduced, particularly at the federal level. These efforts have failed to adequately address the prolonged erosion of wages and economic hardship experienced by public servants over the years. Moreover, such wage increases often yield little impact, as they are quickly neutralized by the persistent and high rate of inflation. Even more troubling is the fact that these wage adjustments frequently exceed the fiscal capacity of many state governments (Vignieri, 2020).

As a result, several states are unable to implement or sustain payment of the new minimum wage, leading to recurring tensions and conflicts between labour unions and state governments—a situation that remains prevalent in many parts of Nigeria today (Bello, 2023). This situation leaves the average Nigerian public servant demoralized, frustrated, and more likely to engage in corrupt or unethical practices at the slightest opportunity, as their take-home pay is insufficient to meet basic living expenses. The saying that their salary “doesn’t take them home” captures the daily reality for many. Consequently, this widespread dissatisfaction undermines the efficiency, integrity, and overall performance of the public service.

3.13. The Imperative of the Post-Bureaucratic Model and Organizational Performance in the Nigerian Public Service

The post-bureaucratic model in public administration was significantly influenced by the work of March & Simon (1958), which challenged the traditional, hierarchical, and rigid

bureaucratic structures that had long dominated organizational theory. Instead, they advocated for more flexible, adaptive, and decentralized approaches to management and decision-making within organizations, including those in the public sector. Their ideas laid the groundwork for a shift toward models of governance that prioritize responsiveness, collaboration, and innovation over strict adherence to formal rules and procedures. However, the concept of the post-bureaucratic model has continued to evolve, with significant contributions from scholars and others during the 1980s and 1990s (David et al., 2023). These scholars expanded on earlier ideas by emphasizing a marked shift away from the strict hierarchies, formal rules, and rigid procedures that characterize traditional bureaucratic systems. Instead, they highlighted the importance of flexibility, collaboration, network-based governance, and a greater focus on outcomes rather than processes in both public and private sector organizations.

The post-bureaucratic model advocates for more collaborative, flexible, and networked structures within public organizations. In contrast, traditional bureaucracy, characterized by rigid hierarchies, strict rules, and formal procedures, often results in inefficiencies, communication breakdowns, and sluggish decision-making. As public service demands become increasingly complex and dynamic, the limitations of bureaucratic systems have become more evident (Dada-bob, 2018). In response, the post-bureaucratic approach offers alternative organizational structures that promote adaptability and improved performance. The compelling comparative advantages of the post-bureaucratic model in enhancing organizational performance in the public sector include:

3.13.1. Technology Integration

The post-bureaucratic model is often facilitated by advancements in technology, which enhance communication and collaboration across various levels and departments within an organization. While the principle that decisions should be documented remains intact, the methods of recording have evolved, becoming faster, more efficient, and more diverse, primarily through electronic systems and digital platforms (Babajide, 2017). This shift reflects a broader transformation in organizational theory and practice.

Post-bureaucracy seeks to overcome the structural and operational limitations of traditional bureaucracy by fostering a more dynamic, responsive, and agile approach to management, one that is better suited to (Jide, 2023). Considering the widespread inefficiencies across various aspects of Nigeria's public service, the adoption of the post-bureaucratic model has become imperative (Wicaksono, 2019). Its focus is on leveraging technology as a transformative path forward, one that holds the potential to significantly improve service delivery, enhance institutional performance, and increase citizen satisfaction.

a. Decentralization

Decision-making authority is decentralized within the organization, enabling faster and more adaptive responses (Egwuatu, 2023).

b. Flexibility and Adaptability

Organizations are better able to respond to shifts in their environment or market conditions, often by relying on more flexible and less rigid procedures (Dada-bob, 2018).

c. Team-Based Structures

The model prioritizes collaboration and teamwork over strict hierarchical structures, with cross-functional teams frequently utilized to encourage a diversity of perspectives (Babajide, 2017).

d. Innovation Focus

It fosters a culture of creativity and innovation by giving employees the freedom to experiment and take risks, unburdened by rigid regulations (Bello, 2023).

e. Employee Empowerment

Employees are granted autonomy, entrusted with responsibility, and included in decision-making processes, fostering a strong sense of engagement and belonging (Agartan & Kuhlmann, 2019).

f. Customer Orientation

There is an increased emphasis on understanding and responding to customer needs and feedback, enabling organizations to adapt more effectively to market demands (Akinola, 2021).

g. Work Culture

There is a movement toward a more inclusive and participatory workplace culture, where employees feel recognized, empowered, and motivated to contribute (Aiyede, 2021).

4. Conclusion

This paper examines the implementation of the post-bureaucratic model and its impact on organizational effectiveness within the Nigerian public sector. The primary mandate of the public service in Nigeria is to ensure optimal performance in delivering a broad spectrum of services to the general public. The study concludes by proposing context-specific strategies for embedding post-bureaucratic practices within the Nigerian public service. Central among these are the prioritization of leadership development, the formulation of robust change management frameworks, and the adoption of policy instruments that incentivize innovation. The study contributes to knowledge by demonstrating the significance of the post-bureaucratic paradigm in improving organizational performance in Nigeria's public service.

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